LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Labour Unity
Founded 1921
Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Israel and the Middle East * R.P.D.

Clean Bombs and Dirty Politics * D. G. Arnott

How to Kill the Rent Act * Tom Vernon

Labour Party's Pension Plan * Katherine Hood

Conflict within the Commonwealth * Idris Cox

Labour Discussion Forum

August, 1957

One shilling and sixpence

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RICH KIN

A LIFETIME in the Labour movement seems to give people the same marked characteristics, whatever their country. Wide experience making richly varied personalities also deepens in them that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. We recognise them instantly, across the years, across half the world. They are of one family with that splendid old veteran in the next street, with the indomitable grannie next door. Catching up on news from readers, I found I had put aside for special re-reading many letters from old 'uns in several countries. Their ages range from bare 'pension entitlement age' to over 90. They include Irish, Canadian, Scots and Americans as well as the English. First one is struck, I think, by the fighting spirit, wit and optimism which shines through their contributions—precisely the qualities of youth, be it noted. But of course they are also endowed with the wealth of experience in life and struggle, in most varied conditions. Labour's great family is the richer for them.

From the *United States* comes a letter sparkling with enthusiasm over the recent 'decisions of our highest court which reflected the lowering temperature of the ten years' delirium with which we have been afflicted. I know we are not yet out of the wood, and I am trying to be sensible about it; but I insist on enjoying to the full the screams of the worst witch-hunters. L.M. means much to us. We read every word and pass it around to others who do the same. Please keep well, all of you, and continue on just the way you are doing.' Some cheerful irony from a *Londoner,* who sends a donation 'because I happen to be flush just now. I should only fritter it away if I did not send it at once. All old age pensioners of 72 years or thereabouts fritter their money away, don't you think?' A *Scots-Canadian* writes: 'I am not working any more; just like the Old Horse, no more work left in me. I have the pension of $53.50 a month. That, after 36 years underground like a mole in Canada and about ten years in Bonnie Scotland. So you can see that I am no friend of the Duke of Hamilton or any of that class. Here's my sub., and I'm adding the 50 cents. That's my best for the present.' Another *Canadian* describes how a lively 79-year-old mother always 'passes L.M. around as much as she can'. and goes on to give highly practical reasons for this support. 'Since the cold war has been started up again with renewed venom we must try to contribute more to the cause. I fear our continent will become the last bastion of capitalism, so the sooner Britain gets socialist the better it will be for all. We find it rather sad that so many British people feel that emigrating to Canada will solve all problems. Canada is no utopia. There is still the struggle to get out of debt and yet have a good home and a decent living. And in these wonderful boom times we have unemployment'. It takes its toll in *Ireland*

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Notes of the Month

Israel and the Arab Middle East

'In view of the existing tension in the Middle East, caused by the situation in Palestine and of the danger of that tension to world peace, the Asian-African Conference declares its support of the rights of the Arab people in Palestine and calls for the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on Palestine and achievement of the peaceful settlement of the Palestine question.'

Resolution of the Bandung Asian-African Conference of 29 States, representing the majority of the world's population, on April 24, 1955.

THE most explosive region in the world today is the Middle East. This is universally recognised. There is less general agreement whence the menace of explosion arises. Despite the unbroken record of Western aggression of the past three-quarters of a century, from the British bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 to the Anglo-French bombardment of Port Said in 1956, and the American massive naval mobilisation this year to overthrow democracy in Jordan, the Western powers have no compunction in presenting themselves as the apostles of peace, earnestly endeavouring

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to restrain the turbulence of the inhabitants from tearing one another to pieces.

Through the Looking Glass

Irony reigns supreme in the current official Western picture of the region they have chosen to call the 'Middle East'. After they have filled the region with their military, naval and air bases, their occupying forces, their military treaties and subsidised regimes, the Western rulers swear that their only desire is to 'protect' the peoples from the menace of penetration by the Soviet Union, which has no bases, no occupying troops and no military treaties in the region. After they have engrossed in their grip the bounteous oil resources of the region, draining out hundreds of millions of profits amid the poverty of the population, they can unsmilingly proclaim that their altruistic aim is to 'prevent Soviet imperialism from securing a stranglehold on the oil supplies' (U.S. Ambassador to London, Winthrop Aldrich, at the Pilgrims' Dinner, January 31, 1957). After having created the Arab-Jewish conflict, where before, until they came, there was Arab-Jewish peace, they now proclaim that the conflict between Israel and the Arab states—a conflict entirely created by their policy—is the justification of their intervention rendered essential in order to keep the peace.

Israel-Arab Conflict

Nine years after the establishment of the State of Israel, the conflict between Israel and the Arab states remains unresolved, and the majority of Palestine Arabs remain refugees, cut off from their homes and the land of their fathers, and denied the rights of national existence, while the minority within Israel are held subject under military rule. The conflict between Israel and the Arab states —itself entirely the creation of imperialism—is thus now made a main lever and justification of continued imperialist intervention. The peaceful settlement of this conflict is therefore a vital interest of anti-imperialist liberation in the Middle East, and the common interest of all the peoples living in this region. A recent visit by the present writer to Israel, to attend a congress of the representatives of the progressive working class, democratic and anti-imperialist sections of the Israeli people, organised in the Israeli Communist Party, who fought courageously against the aggressive Suez-Sinai war, shoulder to shoulder with the British labour movement and the militant working class, democratic and anti-imperialist sections of the French people, afforded an opportunity to see at close

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quarters some of the conditions of this problem and its solution, and left some very vivid impressions which it may be of interest to share with readers.

'Middle East' Mystification

The very term 'Middle East' in its current use is an invention of modern imperialist phraseology that conceals from view the reality and true dimensions of the gigantic Arab liberation struggle which constitutes the foremost battleground of the liberation struggle against imperialism today and which extends from Morocco and Algeria in Northern Africa, through Egypt and the Sudan to Iraq and Arabia, with close contacts with the African liberation struggle. Previously in the nineteenth century the term 'Middle East' was used by the Western rulers to describe, as distinct from the lands bordering the Eastern Mediterranean or 'Near East' or 'Levant', the region from Iran and Transcaucasia to Afghanistan. This terminology corresponded to the Anglo-Tsarist rivalry which dominated the politics of the region. With the twentieth century oil became the dominant issue. The term 'Middle East' was extended by the Western powers, irrespective of the character and composition of the peoples, to include the whole new region of imperialist rivalry, and embrace equally the Arab peoples of the Near East, Egypt and the Sudan, with the people of Iran, and even, in the most recent extension, to reach to Libya on the one side and Pakistan on the other—a geographical absurdity.

Arab Liberation

The serious political student will ensure a closer grip of realities if he sees, not merely the complex of imperialist rivalries in the 'Middle East' (the 'struggle for the mastery of the Middle East' beloved of Mr. Gaitskell, or the 'power-vacuum' abhorred by Mr. Dulles), but the real heart of the situation and the living human reality, the liberation struggle of the peoples against imperialism, and in the forefront the Arab liberation struggle, led at present by Egypt and Syria. During the past decade the peoples of Eastern Asia, Southern Asia and South East Asia have over the greater part of the area overthrown the rule of imperialism, despite remaining pockets of domination. The central battleground of the liberation struggle against imperialism is today the Arab liberation struggle, with its close links with the African liberation struggle (already visibly on the way to becoming the final battleground in the not distant future).

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Victories of Arab Liberation

During the most recent years great victories have been won in the advance of Arab liberation. Syria and Lebanon had won their independence already immediately after the second world war. All attempts to establish a Middle East Defence Organisation parallel to Nato met with resolute resistance from the Arab states, and ended only in the establishment of the Middle East Command of three Western powers together with Turkey, the old oppressor of the Arabs. Even when the Baghdad Pact was imposed by imperialism, it could only secure the adhesion of one vassal Arab state under the vicious anti-popular dictatorship of Nuri es Said, an ancient adherent of British domination (former officer of the Turkish army), against the opposition of all the remainder, and had to drag in Turkey, Pakistan and Iran against the Arabs. Jordan rebuffed General Templer, rejected the Baghdad Pact and turned out General Glubb and the British occupying forces. Egypt under President Nasser secured the evacuation of the British occupying forces from the Suez Canal Zone. Sudan won independence. Morocco and Tunis won independence in face of the colonial war of French imperialism, and Algeria is now the centre of the battle of Arab liberation in Northern Africa. Egypt swept forward, defying the pressure to join the Baghdad Pact, securing the independent supply of arms from non-imperialist sources to make that defiance effective, and carried to a new height the national liberation of Egypt from imperialist chains by the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company.

Suez War Landmark

In face of this advance of Arab liberation the Anglo-French imperialists, in collaboration with the Israel Ben-Gurion Government, massed all their forces to concentrate overwhelming military, naval and air superiority in order to strike a decisive blow at Egypt, the leader of Arab liberation, overthrow President Nasser (as the leaflets accompanying the aggression revealed) and re-establish their old domination in the Middle East. The outcome staggered them, and they are still licking their wounds, quarrelling with one another over what hit them and who was to blame. The aggression ended in total and unmitigated fiasco, enforced withdrawal and acceptance of terms which could have been obtained and had been contemptuously rejected before the war. The two once mightiest Western European imperialist powers had had to bite the dust; their aims,

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no less than the expansionist aims of the Israeli chauvinists, had been exposed and humbled before the world.

New World Balance

Even more significant than the fiasco was the cause of the fiasco. The cause of the fiasco of the aggressors was not merely the strength of Egyptian and Arab resistance. It was the superiority of the strength of the peace forces of the world, led by the Soviet Union, of the co-operation of the socialist countries with the newly independent countries, representing already the majority of mankind, together with the progressive anti-imperialist forces of the working class and peoples in the imperialist countries, alongside the contradictions of imperialism. The resolution of the United Nations was only the reflection of this new world situation, not the efficient cause of the fiasco, as the Anglo-French imperialists now seek to pretend, vainly endeavouring to cover up their humiliation by alleging that their dutiful and enlightened acceptance of international decisions was the cause of the cease-fire. On the contrary. The aggression and invasion was pressed still more violently forward for five days after the United Nations resolution, and only within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the Soviet Note was brought to a sudden and abrupt halt. Thereby a new balance of the world was revealed. The fiasco of the Suez War was the most significant demonstration of the new world situation since Bandung and Geneva. The lesson of the victory of the Chinese Revolution, of the collapse of the joint imperialist invasion of Korea, of Dien Bien Phu and the collapse of French imperialism in South East Asia, was now reinforced by the simultaneous defeat of the attempted Hungarian counter-revolution and the fiasco of the Suez aggression, all pointing the way forward to the future of the world.

Imperialist Counter-Offensive

It is no matter for surprise that the most intense counter-offensive of imperialism, now led by the United States, taking over from the weakened Anglo-French imperialists, has been launched throughout the Middle East during these recent months after the defeat of the Suez and Sinai aggression. The Eisenhower Doctrine proclaimed the intention of the United States to intervene with all means, including military measures, against any country in the Middle East under the old Hitlerite 'anti-comintern' formula of assisting to 'protect' any country against the menace of 'international communism'.

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Saving Jordan for the 'Free World'

What this elastic formula meant in practice was immediately shown by the active intervention of the United States to overthrow parliamentary democracy in Jordan. The technique was simple. The newly elected left wing parliamentary government in Jordan had decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. A military terrorist coup was thereupon organised in the name of King Hussein, who had dutifully proclaimed a 'crisis' due to 'international communism'. According to the statement of the Jordan Chief of Staff, who refused to betray his country by participating in the coup and had to flee to Syria, the coup was organised under the guidance and control of United States diplomatic and military representatives. It was reinforced by the massive concentration of the American Sixth Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean (with a striking power three times as great as that of the Anglo-French mobilisation for the Suez war), and the demonstrative landing of marines in Lebanon. The elected parliament and parliamentary government was replaced by military dictatorship, all patriotic leaders arrested, and all political parties and trade unions dissolved. An American subsidy of £10 million followed. Jordan had been—temporarily—saved for the 'free world'.

> Some people may find it a little odd that the suppression of a popularly elected parliamentary Government in favour of a royal autocracy backed by the Army should be interpreted as making a country more 'pro-Western' in character. These questioners are likely to include quite a number of Jordanians. (*Observer*, 5.5.57.)

Organising Counter-Revolution

Throughout the Middle East the imperialist counter-offensive under the United States has been pressed forward. The Richards Mission was dispatched with 200 million dollars to buy over any reactionary government that could be lined up under the American banner. Israel was officially aligned under the Eisenhower Doctrine by a minority vote of its parliament to take its place in a common camp with the most violent verbal denouncers of Israel of the Nuri type. In Lebanon the anger of the people was expressed in overwhelming anti-American demonstrations in Beirut and a three-day general strike; demonstrators were shot and hundreds arrested, and under these conditions elections were organised to confirm the right wing Government in power against the National Front. The United States took over direct leadership of the Baghdad Pact by joining the Military Committee, with General Twining established as

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Supreme Commander and dominating the Council meeting in June. In Iraq, the last remaining British stronghold, Nuri was replaced—possibly temporarily—as Premier by the former Ambassador to Washington, Jawdat. Every attempt was made, following the visit of King Saud to Washington, to detach Saudi Arabia from the Arab liberation front, and to associate its government with the puppet governments in Iraq and Jordan. Economic and financial pressure has been intensified against Egypt. A supreme offensive is now being concentrated against Syria to break the Government of the National Front and organise every reactionary and corrupt element that can be found in order, with the backing of military threats and dollar bribes, to bring about its overthrow.

A Threat to Peace

This imperialist counter-offensive represents at the moment the most dangerous threat to peace in the Middle East. It endeavours to set Arab against Arab, just as President Eisenhower previously boasted of his aim to make 'Asian fight Asian'. With every means of dollars, military pressure, intrigue and blackmail it endeavours to build on the most corrupt and reactionary elements in order to break the popular liberation movement. It endeavours to disrupt the co-operation of Egypt and Syria with Arabia. It endeavours to mobilise Iraq and Jordan and Lebanon against Egypt and Syria. It plays on the mutual fears and hostility of Israel and the Arab states in order to bring both sides under American domination. Through the Baghdad Pact it disrupts Arab unity and aligns Iraq with the pro-imperialist governments of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan and with the two major imperialist powers. In the name of protection against aggression it organises aggression to establish puppet subservient governments. In their reply of June 12 the Western powers rejected the Soviet proposals for a joint declaration against the use of force in the Middle East, for the cessation of the supply of arms, and for the settlement of all disputes by peaceful negotiation. There is no question whence arises the menace of new explosions and war in the Middle East.

'Building on Corpses'

Grave and dangerous as is this present imperialist counter-offensive in the Middle East, and the temporary setbacks it has been able to inflict upon sections of the national liberation movement, it would be a mistake to exaggerate the stability of the successes achieved by imperialism or to assume that the deeper currents of historical

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development in the Middle East can be reversed. The Richards Mission met with more rebuffs than welcomes, and was not even able to spend its 200 million dollars, but came back with 80 million unallocated, while half of the 120 million allocated was for military aid. 'Much of the Arab world' wrote the *New York Times* (May 5) 'looks on the Richards Mission as a diplomatic blunder.' On May 9 the same journal wrote:

> The military task of the U.S. in the Middle East has not ended with the successful demonstration of the Sixth Fleet, but is just beginning. . . . King Hussein has won a battle, but not the war. The long-term odds are against him unless he is bolstered by indefinite U.S. support, both economic and military.

American strategy seeks to defeat the popular liberation movement by building on the same unrepresentative reactionary feudal puppets on which British imperialism built, with results that are known. To try to build on such people as Nuri and Hussein is, as Egyptian comment has emphasised, 'to build on corpses'.

Zero Plus Zero = Zero

In a revealing statement after the Baghdad Pact Council meeting in June Premier Suhrawardy of Pakistan, whose government now depends on the United States for 40 per cent of its budget, sought to boast:

> People used to say that the Pact nations were being cut off from the Moslem world. Does that make sense when we in the Pact are 125 million Moslems against 25 million in the Middle East outside it?

In view of the conditions of martial law and military dictatorship required to maintain the régime in most of the countries concerned, it might be questioned how many of his '125 million Moslems' could really be regarded as adherents of the Pact. But what he went on to say was still more revealing:

> The question is asked: Why don't we get together rather than be tied to big Powers like the United Kingdom or America? My answer to that is that zero plus zero is after all equal to zero. We have therefore to go further afield rather than get all the zeros together.

Exactly. So all his '125 million Moslems' are 'zero' in this frank admission of the Premier of the largest non-imperialist country in the Baghdad Pact. All the non-imperialist states caught in the net of the Baghdad Pact are 'zero'. The only reality is the Western imperialist powers. A curious 'Middle Eastern' Pact. Thank you, Premier Suhrawardy, for this engaging frankness. But the conclusion is inescapable. British imperialism also sought to build on

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'zero' for the political basis of its military and economic power in the Middle East. Its collapse has followed. But the height of the short-lived British dominion in the Middle East was before the days of Bandung and the present strength of the national liberation movement. The attempt of American imperialism to take over from British imperialism the domination of the Middle East will be even more short-lived.

Israel-Arab Question

It is in this wider context of the central dominant question of the Middle East, the struggle of Arab liberation against imperialism, that the special question of Palestine, of Israel and Israel-Arab relations, needs to be seen in correct proportion. Emphasis on this context as decisive is by no means equivalent to an expression of indifference to the vital interests of the close on two million people, sprung from many nations, who have been settled in the present State of Israel. On the contrary, only this approach corresponds to their true interests and offers the path forward to the solution of their problems. The Middle East is the Arab Middle East. The victory of Arab liberation may be regarded as certain in the near future. The end of imperialist domination in the Middle East draws into view. The future of Israel has to be considered in the light of this situation. There are increasing signs that some of the more sober and responsible political elements in Israel are beginning to recognise the necessity of such an approach to the question.

Is a Settlement Possible?

In the present situation of the Middle East it is manifest that, so long as the present State of Israel, under its existing leadership and policy, should continue to represent an imperialist outpost, like the old Ulster plantation, imposed by the power of imperialist armed conquest and expropriation of the original inhabitants, and armed and economically maintained by imperialism (four-fifths of its imports are at present not paid for by exports), and aligned with Western imperialism against the Arab liberation movement, for so long the conflict inevitably continues. The prolongation of such a conflict could ultimately (since the power of imperialism in the Middle East is approaching its end) lead to consequences which could prove fatal, as the Bulganin Note to Ben-Gurion at the time of the Sinai aggression warned, to the future existence of the present State of Israel. Only when the people of Israel take their fate into

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their own hands, reverse the rôle of imperialist outpost and recognise their rôle as a Middle Eastern people, united with the liberation movement of the Middle East against imperialism, only then a peaceful settlement becomes possible, outside the framework of imperialism, and corresponding to the principles of national self-determination and peace, as already indicated in the United Nations resolutions on Palestine. Imperialism created the conflict, thrives on the conflict, and, while professing to deplore it, in practice exacerbates it by its every action. A peaceful settlement is the vital interest of all the peoples of the Middle East, and of all supporters of democracy, national independence and peace throughout the world.

From Mythology to Reality

The fantastic mythological picture spread by Western imperialist propaganda, and especially by official Zionist and Labour imperialist propaganda, of a little 'progressive' 'Western' 'advanced' and even 'socialist' state of under two millions struggling to maintain its existence in the midst of a hostile sea of 'backward' 'reactionary' 'feudal' 'militarist' Arab states striving for its extermination, needs to be replaced by a more sober estimation of the realities of the struggle of national liberation and imperialism in the Middle East, as well as of the special characteristics of the racial and class structure within Israel. In the present historical situation in the Middle East whatever supports the anti-imperialist struggle, irrespective of the class composition of the forces in the anti-imperialist camp, is fulfilling a progressive rôle. Whatever is aligned with imperialism is reactionary. In this sense, in contrast to the official Western imperialist mythology, there would be more reason to find a certain analogy in some respects—so long as the existing ruling forces and policy dominate Israel—with the position of the European Kenya settlers or occupants of the White Highlands in Kenya, presenting themselves as the representatives of 'Western civilisation' and 'advanced standards' amidst a hostile sea of 'backward' 'barbarous' Africans bent on their destruction, and demanding ever stronger military measures and policies of strength to maintain themselves. Such is the fatally dangerous situation to which the policy of their present rulers, allied with imperialism, have brought the people of Israel, and from which a way out must be found, in their own interest, no less than in the interest of all the peoples of the Middle East.

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Background

The background of imperialist policy which has led to this dangerous situation is familiar. British imperialism initially exploited the Arab liberation movement during the first world war in order to overthrow the Turkish Empire and establish its own empire in the Middle East. For this purpose the British Government signed a written guarantee in 1915 to establish an independent Arab state from the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean to Iraq, that is, including Palestine. In 1916 the plan for a single Arab state was chopped up by an Anglo-French secret treaty—which only became divulged thanks to the Bolsheviks—by which France secured Syria and Britain Palestine. When in 1917, with the advance of the Russian Revolution, it became clear that Arab liberation was likely to sweep far beyond the control intended by Britain and demand the fulfilment of the pledge for an independent Arab state, British imperialism sought for a counterweight against Arab liberation, and for this purpose made an alliance with Zionism. In November, 1917—a significant date—the Balfour Declaration to Rothschild, guaranteeing a 'Jewish National Home' in Palestine, sealed the alliance of imperialism and Zionism. The object was, as Sir Reginald Storrs, subsequent Governor of Jerusalem, later declared, to establish a loyal Jewish 'Ulster' of settlers aligned with imperialism as a counterweight to the Arabs. Conflict was artificially created where none before existed. Zionism, from being a reactionary sentimental utopian movement, became, after the Balfour Declaration of 1917, an official authorised subsidiary department of imperialist colonialism.

Zionism

Zionism had developed during the latter part of the nineteenth century as a reactionary utopian movement, drawn from many strands, but winning support especially as a supposed answer to anti-semitism (Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, had been profoundly influenced by the Dreyfus trial). It was reactionary from the outset, despite idealist support, because, by proclaiming the separate nationality of Jews as Jews, it denied the national citizenship of Jews in the country of their birth or where they lived, thereby cutting them off from the general democratic movement and branding them as aliens in their own countries, just as anti-semitism did. It sought to solve the so-called 'Jewish question' (actually, feudal and capitalist fomenting of anti-semitism), not by

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the advance of the progressive democratic movement, but by herding off all Jews into what Kautsky—when he wrote on the question as a Marxist in 1914, expressing the viewpoint of the international socialist movement—called a project for an 'international ghetto'. The project of settlement in a populated country could only be fulfilled in alliance with imperialism as a department of colonial policy. Negotiations took place with the British Colonial Office in 1903 for settlement in East Africa, but proved abortive. Peaceful settlement in Palestine, despite lavish finance by the Rothschilds and Montefiores, brought only a few thousands there before 1918. Characteristically the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1911, reflecting the viewpoint of the official world before 1914, wrote:

> Modern Zionism is vitiated by its erroneous premises. It is based on the idea that anti-semitism is unconquerable, and thus the whole movement is artificial. Under the influence of religious toleration and the naturalisation laws, nationalities are daily losing more of their racial character. The coming nationality will be essentially a matter of education and economics, and this will not exclude the Jews as such. With the passing of anti-semitism Jewish nationalism will disappear. . . .
>
> Although Zionist organisation was numerically strong, its experience from 1897 to 1910 rendered it very doubtful whether its nationalist aspirations could, humanly speaking, ever be fulfilled.
>
> (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, 1911)

Subsequent editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* after the official alliance of Zionism and imperialist colonialism for the conquest of Palestine, sung the glories of Zionism. Despite the naïve illusions of *Manchester Guardian* editorial writers, it is not only the *Soviet Encyclopædia* which reverses previous estimations in the light of changes in the political situation.

Occupied Palestine

Herzl had spoken of 'the people without a land' coming to occupy 'the land without a people'. But Palestine was already inhabited. In 1912 there were in Palestine 752,000 inhabitants, of whom 83,000 were Jews, or a Jewish population of one-ninth. There were no Arab-Jewish conflicts, and a Jewish resident who recalled the conditions before the British mandate described the Arabs as the 'most gentle and loveable people'. It was only after the British armed conquest of Palestine, and under the military and political power of British colonial rule, that the large-scale immigration of Jewish settlers into Palestine was organised. Between 1918 and 1948 a net influx of over 400,000 Jewish immigrants settled in Palestine. (Sometimes, as in 1927, more left than entered.) Land was bought

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for them by the Jewish National Fund from rich Arab effendis or absentee landowners often on the Riviera; then the Arab peasant cultivators, whose families had tilled the land over the centuries, were expropriated by police or military eviction. Thus Arab-Jewish conflict was created by imperialism. Arab revolt against imperialist conquest and expropriation grew. The general Arab rising of 1929 alarmed the British rulers, who during the next decade proceeded to limit Jewish immigration to a quota—at the very time when the refugees from Nazi terror were seeking asylum. In consequence the British rulers found themselves faced with mass resistance and armed guerilla struggle equally from Jews and Arabs. Frankenstein had created a monster which passed beyond control. Incapable of continuing the battle after the second world war, British imperialism handed over its problem to the United Nations and announced a date for the termination of the mandate.

United Nations Solution

The United Nations Assembly, after prolonged discussion of many schemes and rejection of the Soviet and Arab proposals for an independent democratic bi-national state with guarantees to both communities, adopted a plan for the partition of Palestine and the creation of two independent democratic states, one Jewish and one Arab. The balance of forces in the United Nations was reflected in the fact that the Jewish one-third of the population was awarded 52 per cent of the area, containing 498,000 Jews and 497,000 Arabs. This plan was adopted by the Assembly by 33 votes to 13, with 10 abstentions, the Arab states voting against. The British rulers forbad the entry of the United Nations Commission to prepare the establishment of the two states, and abruptly withdrew, expecting in the consequent chaos to re-establish their domination by war. The Jewish State of Israel was immediately established. Bevin's war against it followed, conducted in the name of the Arab states under British imperialist domination, and principally using the British-officered Arab Legion. The majority of the Arab peasants fled from the war, before the onset of the advancing Israeli armies and the British Arab Legion. As a result of the war the Israeli armies occupied the greater part of Palestine, far beyond the United Nations boundaries, the bulk of the remainder being incorporated by British imperialism into its then vassal state of Jordan, while a small strip went to Egypt. Thus the vast majority of the Palestine Arabs became refugees from the land of their birth, and continue to eke out a miserable existence on the borders of the homes and

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the lands they have lost, the remainder falling under the domination of Israel. From that day to this the British imperialists and the Israeli rulers have united in denying the rights of self-determination to the Palestine Arabs and in resisting the fulfilment of the United Nations decision.

Refugees

Today there are 903,000 Palestine Arab refugees in the camps, as well as some two to three hundred thousand outside the camps, and the Arab national minority of 200,000 inside Israel—a total population of from one and a third to one and a half million Palestine Arabs denied national rights. The refugee camps are mostly situated in Jordan, also in the Gaza strip, alongside the border with Israel. The border is an entirely artificial demarcation line, slicing Jerusalem in half or cutting off Arab villages from their traditional fields. The land on the Israeli side is maintained as a security area; kibbutzim or agricultural co-operative settlements have been strategically located along the border as armed outposts. The Arab peasant refugee may look across to his former land, sometimes creep through the barbed wire at night to sow it (as with the White Highlands in Kenya, much of the seized cultivable or formerly cultivated land is still not settled or cultivated), or to pluck olives from the tree his grandfather planted: he becomes an 'Arab infiltrator' to be shot. The United Nations has partially recognised its responsibility (since the non-fulfilment of its decision has led to this situation) by maintaining the refugees at a starvation level in grim conditions; but the Western powers have recently made approaches to 'solve' the problem by permanently uprooting them, denying them their rights and handing them over to the tender mercies of the counter-revolutionary dictatorship in Iraq. But the justice of the demand for the restoration of the refugees in their own homeland cannot be denied, and has been recognised by United Nations decisions.

> Is it logical to say, as some in Israel do, that Jews have the right to return to their homeland after 2,000 years and Arab refugees have not the right to return after 9 years?
>
> (Meir Vilner, Israeli Communist Member of Parliament, at the World Peace Conference at Colombo, June 15, 1957)

Bankruptcy of Policies of Strength

What prospect is there for the Ben-Gurion Government or ruling Zionist parties in Israel permanently to maintain this position of

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obstruction of the fulfilment of the United Nations decisions, alignment with imperialism, hostility to the Arab world and denial of the national rights of the Palestine Arabs, by superior military strength and periodical massive 'punitive' raids and aggression? The outcome of the Sinai war showed the bankruptcy of this policy. All the military superiority did not secure the spoils of expansion intended, in face of the overwhelming resistance of the peace forces of the world. Premier Ben-Gurion might boast to the Knesset on November 7, 1956:

> Israel now occupies about 60,000 square miles of territory . . . three times the total area a week ago. . . . No pressure from outside will weaken Israel's determination to stay where she is so long as there is no peace settlement defining the permanent frontiers.

But Israel had to give up the spoils all the same.

Policies of Desperation

The new effect of the Sinai war was that Israel stood condemned before world opinion as an aggressor, had exposed the expansionist aims of its rulers in the moment of victory, thus intensifying Arab hostility and justifying the Arab fears of the menace of Israeli military expansion, and yet had not even been able to retain the spoils of aggression. In desperation Ben-Gurion turned to the Eisenhower Doctrine to 'end Israel's isolation', as he claimed (like the fly entering the spider's web—to quote Moshe Sneh's witty reply in the debate—who, observing other flies already in the web, boasted that he was 'no longer isolated'). The result was to place Israel in the same camp of servants of imperialism along with the most reactionary elements of the Arab and Moslem world of the Hussein-Nuri-Suhrawardy type, who seek to cover up their surrender to imperialism by the most noisy proclamations of irreconcilable hostility to Israel. As the Government organ *Dawar* was compelled to admit:

> The danger of the liquidation of the State of Israel comes precisely from the anti-Soviet elements in the Arab world which desire to use the Baghdad Pact for this aim.

Racial and Class Structure

The internal racial and class structure of the present State of Israel corresponds to this bankrupt reactionary policy. It is not only a question of the oppressed Arab minority or of the stranglehold of foreign finance-capital and exploitation of the entire people. The actual structure is more complex, and in certain respects recalls

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the Rhodesian or East African type of stratification of Europeans, Asians and Africans. There are in effect four tiers in the social pyramid. At the top, the Anglo-Saxon or West European Jews. Next, the East and South-East European Jews. Then come the stratum openly called 'Black Jews' from Asian and African countries, especially Yemen, Iraq, Morocco and Tunis. These have constituted the majority of immigrants in recent years. As the reserves of European immigration have dried up and there is no hope of immigration from the United States with the most numerous Jewish population of any country (the term 'Aliya' or migration to Israel is a forbidden word in American Zionist circles, reported the *Jerusalem Post* on May 31, 1957), agents have scoured the Middle East and Northern Africa to find pockets of population with relics of Jewish religious rites and organise convoys of immigrants to Israel. Once arrived, they are either conscripted into the army or transmitted to the appalling conditions of the immigrant camps of the Oriental and African Jews, to be exploited for the lowest unskilled and casual labour. If they try to leave, they find themselves faced with a heavy bill for transport charges to Israel, which they cannot pay; they are tied for life. (Only the Indian Jews succeeded by their demonstrations in compelling the intervention of the Indian Government to enable them to return home.) At the bottom of the pyramid come the Arabs, the most oppressed of all.

Arab National Minority

Of the 200,000 Arabs in Israel, 180,000 come under Military Government. Permits or passes are required for entering or leaving these areas. The operation of the pass system recalls African models in that only short-term passes are given, thus making it difficult for those going out to work from the areas to take regular jobs and in practice relegating them to casual labour. Wages are 30 to 40 per cent below the level of Jewish workers. The Zionist-controlled Histadruth or trade union organisation (which is also the biggest employer in Israel, through joint companies with American capital) originally excluded all Arab workers, and has since admitted only 3,000 Arab workers (excluding many more thousands applying) in its trade union section, without voting rights or representation, sickness or health benefit, unemployment pay or strike pay. The kibbutzim or agricultural settlements are forbidden to employ Arab labour. The lavish high-class agricultural machinery sent from the United States to Israel is almost entirely reserved for the Zionist kibbutzim and settlers; of 3,500 tractors in

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Israel only 11 are in Arab hands. Of the 4,000 students in the only university, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, there are only 50 Arab students, including one woman—or 1 in 4,000 for the Arab population as against 1 in 430 for the Jewish. The Military Courts can detain without trial or deport to any fixed locality. The Military Government can impose night curfews. It was in the imposition of such a curfew that arose the massacre of Kafr Kassim on the first day of the war, on October 29, 1956, when 49 men and women of one Arab village, coming back from labouring in the fields, were shot down in cold blood.

Conditions for a Solution

What are the conditions for a solution of this situation and for a peaceful settlement between Israel and the Arabs? It is evident that the situation has arisen from the refusal to fulfil the principles of the United Nations decisions and the denial of national rights to the Palestine Arabs. Hence a peaceful solution requires the recognition of the right of national self-determination of the Palestine Arabs (not merely of the 200,000 within Israel, but of all the one and a third to one and a half million Palestine Arabs), including their right to set up their own independent State. Bound up with this is the right of restoration and rehabilitation of the Palestine Arab refugees in their ancient homeland. It is not correct that the limitation of the land area of Israel and the subsequent occupation of wide areas by Jewish immigrants makes such a restoration and rehabilitation in their own country impossible. Of the 8 million dunums (a dunum is one-quarter of an acre) of the total cultivable area of Israel only 3·6 million or 45 per cent are at present cultivated. It is not a question of laying down beforehand frontiers and areas. A settlement can only be reached by peaceful negotiation, without imperialist intervention or domination, on the basis of these principles.

Conciliation and Concessions

Such a settlement requires concessions on both sides. It requires the recognition by Israel of the national rights of the Palestine Arabs and of the rights of restoration of the refugees. It requires recognition by the Arabs of the rights of independent national existence of the one and three-quarter millions of Jewish settlers of Israel, despite the historical background of imperialist invasion and conquest which originally made possible that occupation. But only such a settlement, ending the imperialist policies of

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divide and rule, can open the way to peace, the recognition of Israel on the basis of such a settlement by the Arab States, the establishment of Israeli rights of navigation in the Suez Canal or Akaba Gulf, and the promotion of friendly relations between Israel and the Arab States.

Towards a Settlement

Are the political conditions ripe for such a settlement? Not yet. But the conditions are gathering. It is true that Ben-Gurion's slogan of 'Not an Inch of Territory, Not a Single Refugee' would rule out negotiation or peace. But notably different sentiments have begun to be voiced, especially after the disillusionment of the Sinai war, by responsible leaders in all parties, including his own, recognising the necessity for a new approach, even though only the Israeli Communist Party has as yet put forward a positive programme for peace. The unofficial negotiations with some representatives of the refugees may be regarded as in part a reflection of this pressure. It is said that the Arab leaders refuse to negotiate and demand the extermination of Israel. This is a falsification spread by the enemies of peace. The responsible leaders of the Arab States, the Cairo Declaration of Egypt, Syria and Arabia in 1956, the Bandung Resolution on Palestine agreed by the Governments of all the Arab states, all have made clear the desire for a settlement on the basis of the United Nations decisions. There is no other path towards peace, which is the vital interest of all. Such a peaceful settlement is an indispensable part of the task of ending imperialist domination in the Middle East. The danger of war is still urgent. That only makes it the more important to strive for such a peaceful settlement, so that all the peoples of the rich region of the Middle East can enter into that future of freedom and prosperity which they have so justly earned by the ordeals and the heroism of their liberation struggles and which they will assuredly win during the coming years.

July 15, 1957. R.P.D.

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CLEAN BOMBS AND DIRTY POLITICS

D. G. ARNOTT

THE deepest immediate desire of ordinary people is for an end to nuclear weapon *tests*. The question cannot be isolated indefinitely from nuclear weapons production, no doubt; this in turn must be considered in relation to conventional disarmament, surely. But, after ten years of talk, let us now see some real progress for a change; let us make a start with something, somewhere, no matter how small. Logic-chopping can go on for ever.

This represents a fair summary of the feelings expressed at dozens of meetings which I have addressed during the present phase of the campaign against nuclear weapons. People are not blind to the difficulties of disarmament; but they simply cannot see why a start cannot be made.

The difficulties, in fact, are not technical but political. There are still too many people involved in the negotiations who do not really want the tests ended, no matter what they may say for the benefit of the record. The West has now based its 'defence' firmly on the hydrogen bomb; so far has it gone in that direction that it has become virtually incapable of fighting anything but a global war of mutual extermination. Its reason for this policy is its alleged permanent inferiority in men and conventional weapons as compared with the socialist states. Men who think in this way cannot possibly want to see a suspension of nuclear tests in present political circumstances. Insofar as they are pushed in the direction of such a suspension, it is public anger and nothing else which pushes them.

Their reactions indicate that this pressure is becoming effective. Within recent weeks every conceivable argument that might delay test suspension has been pressed into service. It is significant, and indeed heartening, to note how much of this fire has been directed against the arguments advanced by campaigners against the tests. Thus, for the benefit of those who believed that a ban on tests would be self-policing, Mr. Macmillan discovered that test explosions might well be made undetectable. When public disquiet about the hazards of strontium-90 reached its height it turned out that the British tests were not significantly adding to world radioactivity. When President Eisenhower seemed to be leaning rather much in the direction of a temporary suspension of tests, he was called upon in haste by Admiral Strauss, Dr. Teller and Dr. Lawrence, who told him how important it was that the test explosions should go on as

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they were essential to the perfection of a 'clean' bomb which nobody need worry about as it would produce no radioactivity at all.

To prevent confusion and division amongst opponents of nuclear testing it is therefore worth while to summarise the scientific facts upon which the campaign is based. The matter is not absolutely simple, and therefore provides many opportunities for those whose object is to weaken opposition to the tests.

Is there a clean bomb? Nuclear explosions can be produced in two ways. In nuclear fission, the basis of the 1945-type bombs, the atoms of certain heavy metals split each into two parts, called fission-products. The process releases explosive energy; the fission-products, which are left behind in the bomb-cloud, are strongly radioactive for long periods of time.

To the extent that any explosion depends on fission, radioactive waste of this sort will be produced. We do not know of, nor can we even imagine, any fission-process which does not produce waste radioactivity persisting after the explosion.

In the second process, called fusion, certain very light atoms, notably of hydrogen, are knocked together. This reaction also produces explosive energy, but the atoms left over, the fusion-products, are not appreciably radioactive.

Each type of explosion produces sub-atomic particles known as neutrons which can induce radioactivity in their surroundings. The exact nature and quantity of this activity depends on the chemical composition of the surroundings and also on the type of explosion: more neutrons, and of higher energy, are available from a hydrogen explosion than from one based on fission. The neutron-induced activity is a smaller hazard in all senses than that arising from fission-products.

Unlike fission, fusion cannot be induced at ordinary temperatures; the reacting mass must first be heated to a temperature of some tens of millions of degrees. For this reason these reactions are often described as 'thermonuclear'. Clearly some sort of starting-mechanism or fuse is required.

Discounting the cobalt bomb, four types of nuclear bomb may be envisaged, at least three of which have been tested:—

(*a*) Bombs based purely on fission, as in Japan. These need not delay us: a 'clean' fission-bomb is a contradiction in terms.

(*b*) A hydrogen (thermonuclear) bomb triggered by a fission bomb the function of which is to provide the necessary starting heat. Such a device will obviously contain fission-products, and the neutron-induced activity may be an important hazard locally; but the total

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quantities of activity produced would be comparable to those arising from the 1945 explosions.

(*c*) A hydrogen bomb triggered by a device not involving fission. So far as is known, such a bomb has not been detonated but its eventual development, barring test-suspension, is certain. It would not produce fission-products; the neutron-induced activity, as for (*b*) might be hazardous locally but hardly so globally.

(*d*) A bomb, similar to (*b*) above, but surrounded by an outer shell of uranium, which undergoes fission when bombarded by the neutrons arising from the hydrogen shell. These bombs would liberate fission-products in proportion to the size of the outer shell of uranium, on which no upper limit need be placed. These devices, described variously as 'fission-fusion-fission', 'three-stage' and 'high-yield' explosions, form the 'hydrogen' bombs most frequently tested in fact. They derive 80 per cent or more of their energy from fission, not fusion; because of this they produce several hundred times as much radioactivity as any of the other types; and they are responsible for 99 per cent of the radioactivity which has been deposited around the world in the last five years. Their *main* effect, in fact, is to produce radioactive poisons. This is not true of other nuclear weapons.

We can now answer the question posed at the head of this section. None of these bombs are 'clean' in the sense that they produce no persistent radioactivity. All are dirty; but some are dirtier than others. The radioactivity arising from neutrons or from 1945-type fission-bombs could be hazardous locally as the result of tests; but it would hardly constitute a global menace unless testing were on a much more widespread scale than at present. On the other hand the three-stage bombs are in a class apart; and, to the extent that our campaign is based on the dangers of generally-disseminated radioactivity, it is this weapon above all with which we are concerned.

How 'clean' were the Christmas Island tests? That is for Mr. Macmillan to tell us. Until specific data proving the contrary are produced it would be wise to assume that they were three-stage tests.

Can nuclear explosions be concealed? It seems improbable that the explosion of any nuclear weapon could escape detection in a world which had agreed to suspension and was alert for violation. There are at least three methods of detection. The first of these is by disseminated radioactivity which, as we can conceive from what has been written above, might in certain cases fail. The second method is by means of the shock-wave which, for thermonuclear

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explosions, is effective over a radius of more than 2,000 miles. Finally, the light-flash emitted by exploding nuclear weapons is several hundred times brighter than the brightest sunlight and would therefore be detected by night or day.

These methods are not infallible; infallibility is not a property of human inventions, and if we are to wait for that we will wait for ever. But a clandestine explosion would have, say, 90 per cent chance of being detected in a world that was watching out for it, even if methods of control had not been systematised internationally. What would-be violator of a nuclear truce would run such a risk?

Note, however, that three-stage explosions, with their enormous quantities of radioactive dust, have no chance whatever of escaping detection. And it is precisely this bomb which is the most feared at present. Note also that its development must of necessity come after that of a hydrogen bomb triggered by a fission-device, since until one can produce a hydrogen bomb of some sort or other a three-stage bomb cannot be fired. Therefore, even on the lowest grounds of military expediency, there is neither rhyme nor reason in any further three-stage test explosions *by any country under any circumstances,* since other hydrogen bombs, less dirty—and less politically embarrassing—are available for those who feel that they must have them.

It is clear to me that the suspension of tests explosions should begin with these devices, and could so begin immediately. Not even Admiral Strauss could dream up an objection that would hold any water at all.

Can the stockpiling of nuclear bombs be controlled? As late as 1950 it might have been possible, by international inspection, to prevent the stockpiling of nuclear bomb-material. Those days are gone for good. The development of nuclear power is now such that any nation wishing to sequester such a bomb-stockpile could easily escape detection. This fact is perfectly well known to those members of the Disarmament Commission, such as M. Moch, who are seeking to link this issue with the stopping of tests. It is fair to presume that this is simply another delaying tactic. The purpose of test suspension is to rid the biological world of an unjustified hazard and to create sufficient confidence for further measures of nuclear and conventional disarmament to become feasible. Suspension is not an end in itself, that is true; but that is not to say that it can only be considered simultaneously with the question of stockpiles. The one is easy and immediate; the other difficult and long-term.

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The clean bomb story provides the opportunity to make one further point in conclusion. It was perhaps inevitable, following the events of March, 1954, in the Pacific, that opponents of nuclear tests should gradually come to base virtually all their case on the danger of global radioactivity; but it was certainly incorrect. Fallout and its hazards provide a most important argument against these weapons; but, though it has loomed so large these last three years, it is not the only, nor indeed the greatest argument. What sets these weapons in a class occupied by no others is that with their aid the organised basis of human society may be destroyed beyond the point of recovery. It is in this respect that the menace of nuclear warfare is qualitatively new; it is rooted in the fact that more explosive power can now be carried in a single plane than was detonated throughout the whole of the second world war. By this token all nuclear bombs, dirty and not-so-dirty, stand equally condemned.

HOW TO KILL THE RENT ACT

TOM VERNON*

THE new Rent Act is not the final victory of the landlords or the final defeat of the tenants. The enactment of the 1957 Rent Bill does not bring to an end the resistance of forces outside Parliament which, insufficient as they were to get the Bill withdrawn, yet caused it to have as rough a passage as any bill in modern times. In my view, opponents who are customarily Conservative voters—and they played the biggest role in shaking the nerves of Government M.P.s—are not resigned to the defeat of their efforts and they will now find new adherents from amongst tenants facing decontrol who remained impassive whilst the Bill was under debate.

The larger number affected by the Bill (through statutory rent rises and eventual decontrol by Order in Council) have not yet entered the field. The organised protests by local political and industrial organisations of the labour movement were a fraction of what might well have taken place with a stronger and earlier lead from the Labour Party and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. The bye-elections alone, with their startling swing-over of votes showed that, given a lead, it would have been easily possible to defeat the Bill.

The failure to get enough people to understand what the Bill was about, and that it did concern them, will be sharply corrected by

*Mr. Vernon, as many of our readers will know, is secretary of the National Association of Tenants and Residents.

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WOOD-ENGRAVING

‘HAIDUC’

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by A. JIQUIDI (*RUMANIA*)

HAIDUC : peasant outlaw who rose against Turkish rule and landlord oppression.

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the grimly instructive documents delivered on tenants from July 6 onwards: the rent rise notices. Equally instructive will be the proposals from owners of dwellings to be decontrolled, who are not going to occupy the 15-months so-called standstill in leisurely negotiations, but are going to force the pace and try to bull-doze their tenants into signing leases at high rents or into buying their homes at fancy prices.

Then we shall hear what the tenants as a whole have to say. The demand for repeal of the Act will be heard everywhere. Enraged, or anxious, tenants will look for direction and leadership in defence of homes and living standards.

Where will they find this? It would be natural to think that the Labour Party, in particular, will assume the leadership of a struggle to secure repeal; as a logical extension of the Parliamentary fight to get the preceding Bill withdrawn. But this is not happening. No call has been issued to get the Act repealed before it can do very much harm. No statement has been issued as to repealing the Act directly Labour is in power again. Individual Labour M.P.s, and responsible people who are not M.P.s, repeatedly assert that repeal will be impossible because 'too much will have happened' or that 'we don't know just what the effects of the Act will be'. So they say that no pledge or hint can be given at this time as to what a Labour Government might do, but it won't be repeal in any case.

What does the Labour Party offer these millions of tenants now due to be robbed or evicted by their landlords? The prospect of losing their present landlords by becoming tenants of the local council, through a municipal take-over of all rented dwellings 'within the Rent Acts'. In short: not repeal, but municipalisation is Labour's reply to the Conservative grant of 'freedom' to the private landlord.

This is cold comfort to tenants now facing the impact of the Act. Most have never heard the hideous word 'municipalisation', won't know what it means, and cannot know all that it involves because the Labour Party doesn't either. No one can say what priority the bill to put this tremendous take-over operation will be given in Labour's legislative time-table. If a Labour Government takes power in mid-1960, it is reasonable to suggest the *earliest* date for the necessary Act to come into force will be December, 1961. After that, would come the long process of implementing the Act in every local authority area: as the majority are (and may remain) under Conservative control, the whole process may not be completed before 1964, or beyond. Over this whole period, are landlords to

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have an unfettered control of their properties such as they have not enjoyed since 1915?

Apparently. But this cannot be tolerated. Indeed, many Labour people think that unless a better answer than 'Wait for municipalisation' is found, the effect upon some millions of voters will be such as to lose the next general election and, if that were so, then municipalisation won't happen. If rent problems were the only issues, the disenchantment and cynicism brought about by the Labour Party's very dim national role over the Rent Act (and its wretched support for rent-by-income and a means test for council tenants) would cause a Labour defeat once more. But the total indictment of Tories is so heavy that I, for one, would make no prophecy. All the same, why risk defeat by being so cagey? And on a question which everyone can understand and will see as an indicator to the kind of new deal which an alternative governing Party will give the people.

By contrast, those who hear the case for a pledge *now* to repeal the 1957 Rent Act as one of the first steps to be taken (through a very simple little Bill) express the view that this will hasten the date for a general election and be 'a winning card'.

The case is no difficult one to make. The Act has been denounced by Labour M.P.s, amongst others, as robbery and certain to produce unbounded misery. A social catastrophe. It will be an elementary duty, therefore, to seize the first possible chance to suspend the landlords' money-making opportunities, stop their evictions, and bring them all under control once more. The 1923 Rent Act of the Tories caused thousands of evictions, where owners asserted they wanted possession to occupy their houses themselves and merely had to ask for a Court Order. The unhappy evicted families could not be put back into their lost homes, but that did not stop such a weak administration as the first Labour Government, a minority government, from clapping down on the landlords with a brief Act, The Prevention of Evictions Act of 1924, the essential provision of which has remained on the statute book until July 6 this year. Why on earth are Labour M.P.s, and others, at this time, saying that because we 'can't unscramble the eggs' (undo everything which will have happened by 1960, or whenever it is) we will do nothing at all?

How much evil we can prevent, how much we cannot prevent, how much of the wrongs inflicted on people we can correct, depend on the date we have a Labour Government in power. A Labour Government in power early in 1958 can repeal the whole Act and

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much of the Act's wickedness will never be able to be implemented. Why not offer the people that prospect—and get into power on the strength of it? Even by October, 1958, the decontrol provision of Section 11 (1) can be smashed.

If the 1957 Rent Act is regarded as a piece of legislation specifically designed to rectify the anomalies attributed to the Rent Acts of the past, or as a deed of kindness to the neglected landlord class, and as something concerning a certain section of tenants and with no further implications, there is abundant cause to get rid of it. But the Act is none of these things. It is an important manœuvre in the Government's economic plan and only incidentally to that does it deal with frozen rents and statutory tenancies which landlords have clamoured against for years without any Conservative Minister taking much notice. The fact that Mr. Butler (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) was associated in 1956 with the announcement of changes in financial policy affecting council rents, and of 'a review' of the Rent Acts, by itself shows that this 'review' was not a piece of mere Housing Ministry rationalisation, of obsolescent laws and anachronistic tenants' rights.

The Rent Bill was a *vehicle** for achieving a variety of economic purposes, all part of Conservative policy for coping with Britain's lack of investment finance without making serious 'cuts' in arms expenditure.

The Labour Party should be preparing now to frustrate the operation of the Rent Act, and to kill it altogether at the earliest possible moment, as the equivalent of a heavy wage cut; and as an economic manœuvre of a kind which it exists to prevent. To consider the future of this Rent Act as if it were a semi-technical question, for the housing and legal experts of the Party to mull over, is to fall completely for the Conservatives' guile. Therefore, repeal is an essential item for Labour's programme, whatever such experts have to say against the practicableness of repeal.

But is there much substance in their objections? Without going into the pro's and con's of putting through a one-clause Bill which simply repeals the entire 1957 Act, Labour parliamentarians can surely be asked to consider an emergency or transitional law for

*Higher rents, or mortgage payments, channel people's expenditure away from consumption goods, cars, furniture, etc., reduce 'the pressure on the economy' (Butler) and relax 'over-employment', with a loss of bargaining strength by the workers which would offset the inflationary effect of higher rents, etc., if wages were allowed to rise to meet this extra expenditure. The new income in private landlords' hands would be mainly re-invested. Higher rents, or crippling mortgage payments for willy-nilly owner-occupiers, will compel 'squeezing-up' (relatives and lodgers now very welcome!) and that aid to meet housing scarcity will relax the pressure on local councils to build even though high interest and no subsidy were intended by themselves to halt further building. It will, equally, reduce the market for speculative house-builders. Thus, capital investment in both types of housing and in roads, sewers, etc., will be reduced and funds released for other capital projects or colonial developments. A reduced home market will force manufacturers to seek more export sales.

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earliest enactment to arrest further action harmful to tenants, to adjust such wrongs as can be adjusted, and to put the landlords under control again? That will do what millions of people are already demanding, and will increasingly demand, for their protection, whilst the big change-over to municipal ownership is being organised.

Such an Act should provide as follows:

Security of Tenure

(1) Re-imposition of control on the basis of rateable values at March 31, 1956, and with the 1939 Rent Act limits (£100 London and £75 elsewhere). Cancellation of decontrol on vacant possession and through Order in Council (Section 11 (2) and (3)).

(2) Restoration of full protection for furnished tenants.

(3) Repeal of the new power given an owner to eject tenants where he wishes to occupy the house himself (or by a relative) and without having to give proof of alternative accommodation (6th Schedule, para. 21).

(4) Annulment of leases entered into by tenants due for decontrol and restoration of their pre-1957 Act position.

Rents

(1) Repeal of the new rent 'ceilings' and restoration of the limits established by legislation prior to the 1957 Act, i.e., cancellation of all rises under the 1957 Act, though with no tenants' right for repayment of whatever has already been paid.

(2) Grant of power to Rent Tribunals to fix, or to alter, rents under all leases or lettings entered into since July 6, 1957, respecting new housing units or first-lettings of former owner-occupied dwellings.

More could well be included, but these provisions would substantially undo the evil involved by the 1957 Act.

A pledge to do something of this kind can electrify the campaign now under weigh for getting the Act repealed and help Labour to get an early general election—and to win it. To refuse to give any such pledge is to imply that the landlords will reap their undeserved harvest with Labour's acquiescence now their reaping machine is legally usable, thanks to Conservative policy. That will be a tragedy for Labour Party candidates and workers everywhere. It will disgrace the Party permanently. Let us use every means to prevent such a thing happening and, at the same time, bring hope to millions of anguished people.

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THE LABOUR PARTY'S PENSION PLAN

KATHERINE HOOD

'To those in doubt of the plight of the elderly in 1957, I ask take a walk with me on the daily round and see in cold reality homes where replacement or repair of footwear is luxury; a hot mid-day meal for six days a week almost a miracle; warm, winter clothes (so necessary in this part of Lancashire) a mere fancy; see cinders sifted minutely from old fireplaces until they are reduced to fine ash . . . elderly couples endeavouring to maintain appearances by living practically on bread, margarine, tea, potatoes and more bread.'

IN these words Mr. J. Roberts, Director of Civic Welfare in Salford, described what he found when he conducted an enquiry into the conditions of old people in his town. Mr. Roberts rejected the method of the 'statistical sample'; he chose rather to visit every old person in Salford—in all 22,000—in order to give immediate help wherever he could. For as he himself asserts with passionate conviction: 'Human needs cannot wait until tomorrow.'

It is from this standpoint that we must first judge the Labour Party's new pension plan; how far will it satisfy human needs *today*, needs which cannot wait until tomorrow.

The plan offers an immediate £1 a week to every pensioner, male or female, who is at present getting the basic retirement pension of £2. There are about 4½ million retirement pensioners at present including dependant wives; the proposal would mean that about 3 million pensioners would straight away be raised to the £3 per week per head level. This £3 would be subject to no Means Test or earnings rule, and it would rise automatically if and when prices rose.

The minimum demand for £3 per week for a single pensioner, man or woman, was first put forward by the Communist Party in 1954, and later taken up by the National Federation of Old Age Pensioners Associations. It is equal to no more than 25 per cent of average male earnings; yet so appallingly low is the present standard that its introduction would in practice represent a most substantial improvement in the old age pensioners' position. It is well *above* the subsistence level now operated by the National Assistance Board on which a million odd pensioners now drag out their lives.

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£3 a week would be a victory, but the fact that it can be termed so is indeed a measure of the hardship that now exists.

So much for the three million single or widowed pensioners, or those married couples where the wife has been insured in her own right. There are however about 750,000 married couples (1½ million persons all told) where the wife has not been insured in her own right, and where the husband at present draws, in addition to his own £2, a 25s. dependant wife's allowance. For these couples the Labour Party makes a most extraordinary proposal: that this 25s. should remain as it is. Thus the extra £1 will be awarded on the husband's pension *only*, bringing the total income of such married couples to no more than £4 5s.

The present National Assistance scales for such couples is £3 7s. plus rent allowance, which means that £4 5s. will do little more than give them *without* a Means Test what they now get *with* one; they will still be on the Board's harsh subsistence level. Yet the Labour Party itself admits that the standard of living of those on Assistance is 'shamefully low'. One would think that the offer of a 'shamefully low' pension is hardly the way to win a General Election.

It would appear that the National Executive of the Labour Party has *almost* persuaded itself that 'two can live as cheaply as one' for the same bias persists in the proposals for future pensioners. Though the full 'half-pay' pension is not designed to come into effect until after the year A.D. 2000, the scheme does nevertheless offer to the single wage earner now in his fifties the possibility of a pension varying from £3 10s. to £5, without any earnings rule or retirement conditions and subject to automatic increase if prices rise. This is a prospect so different from the present bleak likelihood of a £2 pension conditional on retirement that it will not be surprising if the scheme proves popular with considerable sections. But for the man with a dependant wife the prospect is not so rosy, for this meagre 25s. wife's allowance is to be continued until such time as it will be replaced by a pension earned by the wife in her own right. And for the mothers of large families this wife's pension is likely to be a paltry one—often not more than 30s. or so; in other words, it means that for the next ten or fifteen years at least the majority of married couples will still be subsisting on less than £5 a week.

This is the reality behind the slogan of 'equal rights and obligations' for women under the scheme; it means really that the housewife is to be penalised; it assumes that the woman who has spent the best years of her life bringing up children has contributed less to the

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community than the woman who goes out to work, and therefore deserves less in her old age.

Meanwhile, the scheme proposes that the pension age for women be raised from 60 to 65, thus considerably *worsening* the prospects for some 1¼ million women of that age. To throw away the few minor concessions that women may have achieved in the past is not the best way of achieving 'equality'.

While the benefits are thus in urgent need of improvement in certain respects, the method of financing the scheme is open to the most fundamental objections. The table below gives the main figures necessary to understand exactly what is proposed:

	£ million		
	1960	*1970*	*1980*
Income			
Employers	459	478	481
Employees	292	304	306
Self- and non-employed ...	102	106	107
Exchequer Grant	278	289	291
Interest	29	170	300
Total Income ...	1,160	1,347	1,485
Expenditure on Benefits ...	775	983	1,203
Surplus for Investment	385	364	282

The plan assumes that its main income will come initially from three main sources; first, from employees who will contribute three per cent of their earnings which will be added to that part of the existing National Insurance contribution not earmarked for retirement (it means in practice that the average male wage earner's contribution will go up from its present 6s. 9d. per week to over 10s.); second, from employers who will pay five per cent on these earnings; and third, from the Government which will contribute two per cent of the total earnings of the community.

The first main criticism of this arrangement is a simple one. Throughout the long struggle of the working class for better conditions, the capitalist class have always tried to ensure that any concessions wrung from them in the form of better social services should so far as possible be paid for by the workers themselves. All manner of devices are used for this purpose from direct charges to workers' weekly contributions.

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In its policy statement the National Executive of the Labour Party deliberately rejects the possibility of pensions in the future being paid for either wholly or mainly out of taxation, and proposes instead heavily increased workers' contributions, and an Exchequer contribution which will actually be lower in twenty years' time than if the present National Insurance scheme continued.

Supporters of the scheme will, of course, hasten to stress that the main burden is to be borne by neither workers nor Government but by the employers. The truth is that it is far from certain that the employer's contribution will really be paid for by the employers; in practice it will be added to costs and, wherever possible, passed on in increased prices. It is not a tax on profits.

The other main criticism of the scheme's finances lies in the immense surpluses which are provisionally budgetted for every year, amounting in the first year to no less than £385 million. It is intended that these surpluses should be 'boldly invested' in industry by the State, so that by 1980 the pension fund would have a capital of something like £7,800 million, the interest on which would by that time provide one-fifth of the Fund's annual income. How the money is to be invested is not discussed in this plan, and indeed is outside the scope of this article. But the main thesis is clear; it is derived straight from the orthodox theory of pension-funding, that the object is to save out of current consumption in order to invest in capital equipment, thus ensuring increases in productivity so that the goods will be available when the time comes.

If the labour movement accepts this theory it will be taking a wrong turning. There may be an argument for state investment under capitalism; there is *no* argument for financing it out of the pockets of the workers, and certainly no argument for making the pension conditional on the profitability of the investment. And indeed, one of the most striking aspects of this policy document is the almost child-like faith in the future of capitalism which, it appears, is to continue on and on and up and up mounting ever higher the golden stairway to prosperity, never looking back.

Employers are in the habit of telling the workers that if they tighten their belts now, all kinds of benefits will be available to them tomorrow. So it is with this scheme. 'Restraint' now, so that our grandchildren may retire on a 'half-pay' pension—maybe . . . The trade unions have, by and large, learnt to disregard this line of talk; they have learnt that what matters is what you can win today, not what you are promised for tomorrow. Human needs cannot wait that long.

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CONFLICTS WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH

IDRIS COX

'The sole visible outcome of the conference is the final communiqué. The Prime Ministers reputedly spent two days producing it. The strength of the Commonwealth is bound to be judged outside London by this most unimpressive document. It would be better to admit frankly that there are significant differences within the Commonwealth and to produce something which reflects them more robustly or else to dispense with it altogether.'

(*The Times*, 6.7.57)

THIS epitaph on the recent conference of Commonwealth Premiers does not make it quite clear whether the proposal is to dissolve the Commonwealth or merely to dispense with face-saving documents which only serve to cover up differences! *The Times* has not hidden its displeasure from the moment the conference was announced, but it is extremely unlikely to advocate the break-up of the Commonwealth. Its complaint is against the obvious attempt of the final communiqué to hide the serious conflicts within the Commonwealth. In mid-April it expressed the hope that Mr. Macmillan 'was not over-hasty' in convening the conference. Early in June it thought 'it would be best to postpone the conference until later'. And when the conference was over it described the communiqué as one 'of the type we have grown to expect'. The attitude of *The Times* is indicative of the cool reception everywhere to the final communiqué. This prompted Mr. Macmillan to give a special radio broadcast on July 7—but it was even less informative than the official communiqué. Nor was his choice of words too happy:

> Yes, this was a family meeting. And, as you and I know well, family meetings can be lively, frank, friendly, vigorous, and not always unanimous.

This was the eighth conference of Commonwealth Premiers since the second world war. Three Premiers were absent (South Africa, New Zealand, Ceylon) and sent deputies instead. Only two Premiers, Menzies (Australia) and Nehru (India) had attended before, and the remaining eight representatives (including Macmillan) attended for the first time as official spokesmen of their respective governments. None of the colonies are eligible to become Commonwealth members, and Ghana's independence was achieved just in time for its Premier to attend.

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What were the main problems confronting the conference? First, serious divisions arose within the Commonwealth on the British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt last year: since then the Eisenhower Doctrine has enabled U.S. imperialism to make bigger inroads in the Middle East and to become the senior partner in the Baghdad Pact. Second, there were the implications of the British Government's H-bomb tests, of its White Paper on Defence, the effect of this on Nato, on Seato and military plans in the Far East—together with plans for a new war base in Kenya and the South African proposal for an 'African Defence Pact'. Third, there was the serious problem of growing U.S. trade and investment within the Commonwealth, dissatisfaction of the Dominions on trading facilities with Britain and the low scale of British investment, and grave disquiet on the remaining U.S. restrictions on trade with China.

Little or nothing appears in the communiqué on the nature of the discussion on these issues— and even less on any measure of agreement. Using the most non-committal phrases it confines itself mainly to a list of pious declarations:

(1) Increased co-operation between nations.
(2) 'Constructive' action to improve and strengthen the United Nations.
(3) 'Grave concern' at the events in Hungary.
(4) Efforts for a 'limited' agreement on disarmament which would reduce world tension and create conditions for a 'more comprehensive scheme of disarmament'.
(5) Long-term stability in the Middle East depends on 'economic and social progress'. The short-term aim should be to 'relax the tension' between the Arab States and Israel, 'relieve the plight' of the Arab refugees, and tackle the 'unresolved problems' in relation to Suez.
(6) Ease 'tension' and maintain 'peace and stability' in the Far East and south-east Asia, and approval of the 'important contribution' of the Colombo Plan in raising living standards.
(7) The importance of 'high levels of domestic saving' to be secured by 'sound internal policies' to carry through the various development programmes of Commonwealth countries. The United Kingdom would 'continue to play its leading role in furthering economic development in the countries of the Commonwealth', but it was stressed that 'it is also important to encourage investment from other sources on suitable conditions'.

Trading relations within the Commonwealth and the problem of a 'free trade area' in Europe were left over for a later meeting of experts; financial problems were relegated to a meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers *after* the World Bank meeting in Washington in September; and the development of nuclear energy for peaceful construction will be a subject for Commonwealth scientists in 1958.

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None of these pious declarations are binding on Commonwealth members—and some of them are not so pious! The door is left wide open for the British Government to undermine the United Nations and to do its utmost in the forthcoming General Assembly to encourage further intervention in Hungarian affairs. The opposition to all the reasonable Soviet proposals to suspend H-bomb tests, abolish nuclear weapons, and planned disarmament will still go on.

There was no agreement among Commonwealth members on these issues. Both India and Ceylon were against H-bomb tests and nuclear weapons and kept out of the discussions on 'defence', and Dr. Nkrumah remained only as an observer. India and Ceylon (even Australia and New Zealand) were against the U.S. restrictions on trade with China, and most of them were dissatisfied with the smooth assurances on United Kingdom trade and investment within the Commonwealth. Faced with India's opposition to the campaign aimed at exploiting the events in Hungary, the conference only 'took note' that the report on Hungary comes before the General Assembly of the United Nations; though Mr. Menzies (Australia) used the occasion of his first broadcast after the conference to vent his spleen on this subject and to object to the U.N. condemnation of the invasion of Egypt.

The conference did not achieve unity within the Commonwealth, but underlying all the discussions (except for reservations by India, Ceylon, and Canada to some extent) was the emphasis on co-operation with United States imperialism. The injunction to 'encourage investment from other sources' obviously means the United States. Mr. Suhrawardy, Pakistan Premier, went to Washington afterwards and made fulsome tributes in both Houses to U.S. leadership against 'international Communism'.

Beneath all these assurances of co-operation with U.S. imperialism are the growing conflicts within the Commonwealth, further stimulated by the steady penetration of United States influence, trade and investment. Even Mr. Menzies made it clear before the conference (April 4) that: 'Under both Seato and the Anzus Pact it seems clear that in the event of war we shall be fighting alongside the U.S.A. . . . it would be manifestly difficult for the United Kingdom to maintain supply lines.' An editorial in the *Manchester Guardian* (May 24) emphasised that Australia and New Zealand 'must gear their defences to the American rather than the British machine'.

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In the sphere of trade and investment U.S. imperialism is making big inroads, and Britain's proportion of trade with the Commonwealth is steadily declining (from 46·3 per cent in 1952 to 44·9 per cent in 1956), due largely to the stranglehold created by Britain's trade being tied so closely to the dollar market. On the other hand, United States trade with the Commonwealth between 1952 and 1955 went up by 17 per cent. The contrast is even greater between 1950 and 1955 when U.S. trade increased from 5,957 million to 8,700 million dollars—more than 46 per cent.

Between 1952 and 1955 Canadian exports to Britain rose by £23 million, but to the United States by £234 million—ten times more. Canadian imports from Britain rose by £41 million, but from the United States by £524 million—over 12 times. Of the £6,000 million United States investment in the Commonwealth (2½ times more than Britain) more than £4,000 million is in Canada, as against £1,000 million British investments. No wonder Diefenbaker was able to exploit the growing opposition throughout Canada to U.S. domination and so bring to an end the 22-year-old Liberal administration which was so closely tied to U.S. imperialism.

The London conference has not solved the conflict of interests within the Commonwealth. Certainly it has done nothing to halt U.S. imperialist penetration. Macmillan laid great stress in his radio broadcast that the Commonwealth is *not* 'a fixed and static thing—it is all the time growing and developing'. He did not specify in which direction it was 'growing and developing'. True, the Commonwealth is changing rapidly, not only due to U.S. penetration, but more particularly to the rapid advance of colonial liberation and the growing impact which India, Ceylon, Ghana, and the prospective new members will make within the Commonwealth.

The existing Commonwealth is held together, not by common interests, but by the dominant forces of British imperialism, which seek co-operation with U.S. imperialism because they fear the growing strength of the socialist world and the advance of the colonies towards independence. But co-operation with U.S. imperialism serves to undermine still further the existing structure of the Commonwealth. The new forces arising within the Commonwealth (particularly India, Ceylon, and Ghana) together with the colonial liberation movement, will realise that their future lies neither with U.S. nor British imperialism, but with the socialist and progressive forces which are paving the way for the abolition of all forms of imperialism.

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LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM

Not so many letters were written in the heat-wave of June-July: but those that arrived came hot and strong. The first continues the trade union controversy of these last issues: and may well call forth rejoinders. Last day for September, (short letters, please):Thursday, August 8, to:—

THE EDITOR, LABOUR DISCUSSION FORUM,
134, Ballards Lane,
London, N.3.

★

To be Organised—6,000,000!

I am indeed pleased to see *Labour Monthly* printing letters about women's wages. It is performing a real service in doing so, if only in exposing the confusions and erroneous thinking in the minds of our engineering brothers and sisters.

Really, Brother Saunders! I'm getting a little tired of the type of argument you, and other well-meaning trade unionists, put forward as a rationalisation for doing nothing—or, at best, very little, for that doubly-exploited section of fellow-workers, the women. We know Sister Silk will accomplish nothing with her proposals, but I deeply sympathise, and know only too well her feeling of disgust and frustration. This sense of frustration is not only felt against the employers, but also against trade unionists like yourself.

We workers know and expect the employers to try to extract as much profit from every worker, or groups of workers, as they can get away with. But we also expect the trade unions to protect, and advance, our wages and conditions.

Before we get into a cat-and-dog fight amongst ourselves, all parties must first recognise some facts which can't be blinked. First, women are in industry to stay. In engineering, for example, the proportion has increased ever since 1948. Secondly, their work has a wide range of skill and ability, although their pay remains far below the male labourer's. As Sister Candiotti said at the A.E.U. Women's Conference this spring, it is 'disgraceful that women should receive £6 per week and the men double that amount for doing the same work'. Thirdly, classifying jobs as 'women's work' has increased the trend toward specialisation. For example, in my factory, men on night shift were put on to operate certain machines which are 'women's work' by day. They could not produce the number each hour to earn the bonus on the basic rate. (If they could have worked to that speed, and if they had received 'equal pay' with the women for the job, they would have taken home just about £8!) Fourthly, employers have no 'incentive' to get rid of obsolete machinery whilst they can employ women at rotten wages. An ever-increasing quantity of work is labelled 'women's work'. And in these days of 'new processes', it is not *their* work which is being automated: so all engineers should chew that over! It is not whether a job

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is called 'women's work' that matters it is that it is underpaid that affects us all, and should concern us all. Fifthly, the differential between women's and men's pay is being increased all the time, whilst negotiations are kept separate and claims are not presented and fought for simultaneously.

The present status of our women engineers is not only disgraceful, and one which should arouse the greatest anger on the part of the whole labour movement, but is also a powerful weapon in the hands of the employers. Seven million women in industry! One million organised! Are the employers and their Tory Government already crushed? Is the trade union movement now so strong that we can afford not to bother about the strength some six million new trade unionists would bring? For that is what we are throwing away by not organising and fighting on behalf of the lowest paid workers in industry.

But now let us examine what I consider to be one of the key questions concerning this situation.

What do advanced, militant trade unionists like Brother Saunders, who at least see and admit the inequalities that exist both on the job, and in the A.E.U., propose? That women should attend their branch meetings! He says this would 'impress' him and our other trade union brothers. And how neatly he solved the problems of the extra chores and burdens that married women workers bear. He shows a willingness to excuse these women from attendance, but insists that the 'single' women should attend. But he forgets that most single women spend what little spare time they have in finding husbands for themselves, so that they too can take on extra chores and burdens. So, since we can't get the married women, or the single ones, how about the spinsters near retiring age?

I'll tell you a secret, Brother Saunders. Most women, in spite of all the extra chores and burdens and problems, can manage to get out, *and do,* if it's for something they are really interested in. During the recent strike the women in my factory said: 'We are always being called out to support the men's claim; when are the men going to be called out to support ours?' My reply was: 'If the employers get away with turning down the men's claim, what chance will ours have?' After thinking it over, they agreed. But—when *are* the men to be called out in support of ours?

Why are special conditions laid down for us before any militant action is taken on our behalf? Every trade unionist knows of the appalling attendance at most branch meetings after all these generations of trade unionism. Yet this doesn't stop the unions from developing militant struggles on behalf of the men's claim. I am one of that 'infinitesimal' number of women that Brother Saunders refers to who attend branch meetings, though not a member of the A.E.U. but of the N.U.G.M.W. But what happens when women like myself try to 'impress' our fellow trade unionists with the need to fight for our demands? We are either patronised or considered 'cranks'. What other section of workers would be left more or less unaided, to organise for themselves, and as Brother Saunders points out—without even full union rights? To be lectured to in this fashion, to have this responsibility placed on our shoulders, on top of all our other burdens, is too much, and so most women begin to feel overwhelmed with the enor-

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mity of the task and give up before they begin.

What is needed is leadership and militant action. Surely, if our trade union brothers don't have the foresight to take up this fight in the interests of the women, they should recognise the need to do it in their own.

What is needed, as a first step, is that all trade union branches send resolutions on the male labourer's rate for women, to both their district and executive councils. Call on the local trades council to conduct an inquiry into Women's Organisation and Wages. This will begin to prove to the unorganised women that unions mean business, and to all parties that action speaks louder than words.

MICKEY DOYLE (Mrs.),
Wandsworth.

For Life on this Planet

Congratulations on the June *L.M.*, which mostly deals with facts on Nuclear Warfare, what to do to avoid such a horror, and thanking those very good women, 'The Women in Black'.

Three years ago, my husband and I attended a Union of Democratic Control meeting, sent as delegates representing our Barking Labour Party. The information delegates were given from the platform that night was terrifying; and it was given by an atomic scientist, a doctor and a few Labour M.P.s. We reported back this information to the party and told members how depressed we were. Some folk were interested, but the majority didn't accept the information with such horror as we had. However, I resolved then that I would press for the abolition of this terrible H-Bomb until its cessation.

I devoured any news I could read written by reliable good people who were opposed to the tests, and every few months have pressed our Labour Party to act. Barking's resolution calling for a national Labour Party campaign failed; but we were told we could have a campaign of our own locally. Like many other constituencies we waited for the leadership on the most vital issue history has ever known. Instead the fight for breathing non-poisonous air has been left to a handful of already overworked people in the constituencies who have had the worries of elections and so forth to contend with this spring.

However, these Ban-the-H-Bomb campaigns are doing very well. My husband and I have joined the Quaker Society of Friends protest campaign, and find that Liberals, Labour, Communists and religious people work extremely well together when fighting for peace. We all have something in common, each one of us believes that we are responsible for all children in the world, born and unborn. These little ones, who have no say as to whether they shall be healthy, maimed, or normal. The children without knowing it rely on us to be decent human beings and that is one of the best reasons for joining in this fight for life on this planet.

R. V. NESS (Mrs.),
Barking.

Top-level talks and the need to demand them—this is being forgotten. While not posing it against the struggle to ban the H-bomb, I think it must not be forgotten that such a meeting can go a long way toward coming to an agreement not only about H.-bombs but for more peaceful relations. This is a necessary condition for the advance of Socialism.—*A.M., Essex.*

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'Only Doing His Dooty'?

American capitalism seeks ultimate world domination and therefore feels compelled to exonerate those of her armed forces who transgress against the laws—even unto killing the inhabitants of 'friendly' countries allied to the American Bloc, it seems. So if the conditions referred to by reader R. Dixon (July *L.M.*) of Yank service personnel taking 'pot shots, the second of which killed', at Japanese citizens, are to be avoided here in Britain, constant vigilance is called for to assert our basic birthright—and which our own capitalists never cease to claim for us in theory, if not in practice—of saying a forthright *'No!'* to such invasions by the Yanks.

Recently a Lancs county police officer wasted much precious petrol to visit my home three times to 'warn' me not to leave my newspaper at an adjacent U.S. camp. The constable had been sent by a U.S. officer. The poor bobbie looked plain silly when I told him if it was a crime in England to leave the *Daily Worker* around, then every citizen who left his or her daily paper upon train, or bus, was equally a person to be visited by the police. To stop such nonsense I had eventually to contact the Clerk to the County Council. So beware! Ye who read *The Times*, etc.

LES GIBSON.

Lancs.

★

(This month's prize of ONE GUINEA *is awarded to Mrs. Mickey Doyle for her letter entitled* 'TO BE ORGANISED—6,000,000!')

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

THE WAY FORWARD

The working class have to resist every attack that is made upon them; in this they must be actively supported by every other section of the workers. All militant class-conscious workers have the duty to rally such support, to stimulate and encourage such resistance, to develop the leadership and organisational forms of all these partial struggles, for out of them will come the class power and strength, the political consciousness, the knowledge and the conscious aim that through these struggles is being opened up the path for the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

The struggle for Socialism is not something apart from the fight against wage cuts, the Means Test, solidarity with the colonial peoples, the fight against war, etc.

From *The Bradford I.L.P. Conference And After*, by Harry Pollitt, August, 1932.

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HANDS

There are hands I love:
A mother's hand
Shielding her babe from harm,
A lover's hand
Yielding, caressing, warm,
A child's hand
Learning the thrill of skills,
A farmer's hand
Hard as the earth he tills,
A worker's hand
Strong as the world he builds.

These are the hands
Of the optimistic millions
Who live and love living,
Fearless because they know fear,
Honest although they are robbed,
Frank although they are deceived.

These are the hands—
Twice their own number—
To open all doors,
Break all fetters,
Work all miracles.

These hands I love,
They are our hands.

* * * *

There are hands I hate:
The hand killing men, women, children for gain,
The hand sending bombers to poison the rain,
The hand spreading plague through the household fly,
The hand taking snapshots of heroes who die,
The hand rearing horses on Lobby Day marches,
The hand thrashing militants under the arches,
The hand coldly totting up profit and loss,

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The hand of His Lordship, the hand of the boss,
Curling a finger to beckon a lackey,
Snapping a finger to summon a taxi,
The hand voting billion credits for war,
The hand barring coloured folk from the school door,
The hand that with knife, noose and gun put to death
The Rosenbergs. . . .
Zoya. . . .
Kaleba. . . .
In peace may they rest!

Those are the hands
Of a desperate minority
Frenziedly clutching
At tattered privileges,
Savagely hatching
Untold harm.

Few—but dangerous,
Those hands I hate
And
shall
disarm.

PETER TEMPEST.

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APRIL: *Into Battle* (R.P.D.); *European Common Market* (Daniel Curwin); *Conference in Ghana* (T. F. McWhinnie); *Factory Committees* (Andrew Rothstein); *China First Seen, II* (R. Page Arnot); *Kunlun* (Mao Tse-tung); *Labour Discussion Forum*. BOOK REVIEWS: *Jim Larkin* (R. M. Fox); *Stories from Chukotka* (Ritkheyu); *The Soviet Union and Socialism* (Andrew Rothstein); *Soviet Turkmenistan* (P. Skosyrev); reviewed by C. Desmond Greaves; Reginald Bridgeman; Clemens Dutt, P.A.

MAY: *Class Strategy* (R. Page Arnot); *Eye-Witness in Kerala* (D. N. Pritt, Q.C.); *The Fight for Disarmament* (Quæstor); *Israel* (S. Mikunis); *Workers' Power: A Postscript* (Andrew Rothstein); *Labour Discussion Forum*. BOOK REVIEWS. *America and the British Left* (H. Pelling); *U.S.S.R. Economy: A Statistical Abstract;* reviewed by H. Collins, P.A.

JUNE: *Nuclear Nihilists* (R.P.D.); *New Poems* (Mao Tse-tung); *Some Thoughts on Engineering* (J. R. Scott); *H-Bomb for Adenauer?* (Gordon Schaffer); *The Rats of Bikini* (Ivor Montagu); *The Mourning Vigil* ('A Woman in Black'); *The Indian Revolt of 1857* (W. S. Adams); *Labour Discussion Forum*. BOOK REVIEWS: *The Strange Case of Thomas Walker* (F. Knight); *Ivan P. Pavlov* (H. K. Wells); *The Stalin Era* (A. L. Strong); *Tibet* (Alan Winnington); *American Radicals* (Ed. H. Goldberg); reviewed by G. Rude, S. Leff, G. Hardy, D. N. Pritt, Q.C., J.W.

JULY: *Labour Policy Battle* (R.P.D.); *Some Problems in Engineering* (L. Ambrose); *Europe One or Divided?* (Quæstor); *Conspiracy Down Under* (Gordon Schaffer); *Workers' Councils in Poland* (W. Gomulka); *China First Seen III* (R. Page Arnot); *Labour Discussion Forum*. BOOK REVIEWS: *The Twenties* (J. Montgomery); *It's me, O Lord!* (A. R. Coppard); *Verge of Glory* (F. Wright); *The Holy Family* (Karl Marx and F. Engels); *Black Power* (R. Wright); *A.F.L.-C.I.O. Ltd.* (A. I. Goldberg); *Les Secrets de l'expedition d'Egypte* (M. & S. Bromberger); reviewed by G. Willoughby, Clemens Dutt, I. Montagu, J.W., D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

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Book Reviews

JAMES KEIR HARDIE

Keir Hardie, by Emrys Hughes, M.P. (248 pp. Allen & Unwin. *15s.*)
The Hungry Heart, by John Cockburn. (286 pp. Jarrolds. *18s.*)

WHETHER Keir Hardie is regarded, in Engels' phrase, as a 'more than crafty Scot', or canonised as the flawless founder of the Labour Party, is not of great moment nowadays. What emerges strikingly from Mr. Hughes' sympathetic and admirably-documented study is Hardie's fundamentally Socialist character, his immense superiority to too many of his twentieth century successors in the Labour leadership.

Hardie was no Marxist, but long-forgotten quotations here show that he understood the crucial role of Marx and the key position of Marxism in the Socialist movement; he could never have supported the policy of proscribing and banning Communism and Communists. Equally the clarity of his anti-imperialism (illustrated most topically here in the case of Egypt), the consistency of his well-known anti-war struggles, the modesty and frugality of his personal life, his profound faith in the common people and their vast capacities, are all extraordinarily apposite today. His dislike and suspicion of Ramsay MacDonald ('MacDonald will betray the movement', he prophesied long before World War I) was characteristic.

One of the most striking differences between Hardie the miner-pioneer and the Oxford-educated oligarchs of the Labour Party that we know was his Radical, republican attitude to the monarchy. The notorious intervention of George V in the Irish crisis of early 1914 brought a blistering attack by Hardie on the crown as a reactionary and undemocratic force. And he made it personal: 'King George is not a statesman. He is not the pleasure-loving scapegrace which his father was before him, but like his father, he is destitute of even ordinary ability. Born in the ranks of the working class, his most likely fate would have been that of a street corner loafer. And this is the man who is being made the tool of by the reactionary classes to break the power of Democracy.'

No wonder, Hardie added, that 'once more the Republican slogan will be heard in the land'. The book is full of fresh light like this on Hardie and his attitude; it is much superior to its sentimental and subjective predecessors and should become a standard work.

Mr. Cockburn sub-titles his work 'a romantic biography of James Keir Hardie'; it is not intended to compete as a serious study with Mr. Hughes. Nevertheless it is well done as a piece of fictionalised biography; if 'romantic' it is not sentimental. Mr. Cockburn brings to the performance of this particular task his many years as a journalist and trade unionist in Glasgow (he has long been a leader of Scotland's largest N.U.J. branch).

The extensive illustration of both books from contemporary photographs, cartoons and the like is noteworthy and certainly helps to recreate the atmosphere of Hardie's dour battles, half a century and more ago.

ALLEN HUTT.

TRUTH AND FALSITY

Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brain-Washing, by William Sargant. (248 pp. Heinemann, *25s.*)

'POLITICIANS, priests and psychiatrists,' writes William Sargant,

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'often face the same problem: how to find the most rapid and permanent means of changing a man's beliefs'. He goes on to stress the enormous importance of this problem 'because of an ideological struggle that seems fated to decide the course of civilisation for centuries to come', and sets out to show how beliefs, 'whether good or bad, false or true, can be forcibly implanted in the human brain'. Ordinary people, he says, 'must know what to expect and what the best means are of preserving their former habits of thought and behaviour, when subjected to unwelcome indoctrination'. 'It must be emphasised as strongly as possible', he writes, 'that this book is *not* concerned with the truth or falsity of any particular religious or political belief. Its purpose is to examine some of the mechanisms involved in the fixing or destroying of such beliefs in the human brain'.

William Sargant is a physician in psychological medicine at a London teaching hospital, but to a mere layman, like the writer of this review, it seems very odd that it should be possible to ignore the truth or falsity of beliefs in this connection. The operation of convincing someone that $2 + 2 = 5$ would seem to be rather different from that of demonstrating that $2 + 2 = 4$. Sargant, however, seems to think that this difference must be ignored if a greater understanding of the 'simple physiological mechanisms of conversion' is to be achieved.

His approach also rules out consideration of the intellectual process of conviction: 'And it must not be held against me that I do not discuss some types of purely intellectual conversion, but only those physical or psychological stimuli, rather than intellectual arguments, which seem to help to produce conversion by causing alterations in the subject's brain function'.

The influence of environmental factors is reduced to a minimum: 'The personality can react only along limited lines to all environmental changes. . . . Since, therefore, the same basic patterns of reaction to stress were all noted in the Classical era, if not for thousands and thousands of years previously, and since their equivalents can also be demonstrated in the behaviour of animals, they are most likely, it seems, to be physiologically determined.' It is an argument which, in Sargant's hands, brings us back to that well-known thesis, so dear to reactionaries: 'Human nature never changes'.

The book, enlivened by a collection of remarkably sinister-looking illustrations, takes us on a colourful though sometimes depressing tour of the sermons and methods of John Wesley; Pavlov and his dogs; snake-handling religious cults in the United States; voodooism; Rock and Roll; Dr. Billy Graham; the use of drugs, insulin, electricity and leucotomy in treating mental illness; the effect of the Normandy landings on troops; the treatment of war neuroses, etc. From all this the conclusion is drawn that if intense excitement is maintained until fatigue, exhaustion or complete collapse occurs, beliefs can be more easily implanted or reinforced and sudden religious or political 'conversion' may take place.

With his greatly over-simplified, mechanistic approach, Sargant lands in the greatest absurdities when he turns his attention to Communism and the Socialist countries. It must be said that he does not like Communism at all, and his book appears to be motivated to a large extent by concern to do his bit for what he calls the 'safety of the free world'. One can only hope that he does not

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swallow everything he is told with the same uncritical gusto as he has swallowed stories about methods of political indoctrination in China and suchlike.

What his book has to say about the treatment of mental illness is of considerable interest to the layman, but unfortunately the layman is not in the best position to assess the author's findings in this field. I shall be so bold as to suggest, however, that he sometimes seems insufficiently aware that what may be true of the mentally ill is not necessarily applicable to the mentally healthy. In much the same way, in his chapter on 'The Eliciting of Confessions', he would have done well to remember that while history records the cases of such unfortunate persons as Timothy Evans and van der Lubbe it also tells us of Dimitrov, Galileo and others who managed to maintain rather higher standards of human dignity. And when giving data on the reactions of American troops during the Normandy landings, he would have done well to consider whether the incidence of war neuroses might not have been very different among soldiers with a clearer understanding of the cause for which they were fighting and a greater enthusiasm for that cause.

There is a kind of novel, familiar to readers of fiction nowadays, which specialises in the Doomed and the Damned. If you stay the course and reach the end of one of these works, it leaves you, more likely than not, feeling a little depressed about the human race and its prospects, until you remember that 'most people aren't a bit like that'. With all due respect for its aura of science, its impressive footnotes and its bibliography, I had much the same reaction after reading *Battle for the Mind*. And incidentally I have been left with an uneasy feeling that some of the champions of the 'free world' are no more to be trusted with a knowledge of mental processes and their physiological basis than with an understanding of nuclear reactions. Too much of this book, with its emphasis on physiological processes and techniques rather than on intellectual conviction and the truth or falsity of beliefs, seems ready-made to suit the requirements of some advocate of 'Leucotomy for Subversives' or 'Give the Reds Insulin Treatment'.

In conclusion it must be said that unless you are running a voodoo session or a snake-handling congregation, or something of that sort, you would be ill advised to place too much confidence in these 'simple physiological mechanisms of conversion' as means of increasing the membership and influence of your organisation, even though William Sargant assures us that 'a better understanding of this means of creating and consolidating faith will enable religious bodies to expand much more rapidly'.

R. MALCOLM.

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SOVIET PSYCHOLOGISTS

Psychology in the Soviet Union. Edited by Brian Simon. (306 pp. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., *32s.*)

UNTIL recently, the only available translations of Soviet psychology have been almost entirely confined to the earlier researches of Pavlov. Snippets of information have appeared in the form of single papers, reports of congresses and occasional reviews in the American psychological journals. In the last few years, however, a few books have appeared which have enabled the English speaking world to get some idea of what is being done by Soviet psychologists. The present book may be regarded as the culmination of this development. It gives the best picture of Soviet psychological work available in English, and does so in a way which leaves little room for criticism.

The twenty chapters of the book are grouped into five parts, the first of which consists of a general review of recent research. Current trends are described and advances and achievements detailed. It also contains the usual criticisms and listing of deficiencies, which we are so accustomed to see in such writings, and which form the bread-and-butter of those Cold War propagandists who never see anything but faults in everything Soviet. That the Soviet psychologists have nothing to fear from honesty is well exemplified by the other parts. The seven papers of Part II are concerned with theoretical problems and their application to problems of the development of perception, attention, voluntary activity and language. The next part demonstrates the value of the Pavlovian approach to experimental investigation of spatial discrimination and the formation of associations; but the chapter on memory is confined to general discussion.

Most readers will consider Part IV the most interesting. It is concerned with child psychology and the psychology of teaching. It is refreshing to find work in the latter field which has not as its main interest the problems of selection. Unlike other aspects of Pavlovian research, it is particularly concerned with the qualitative differences between individuals. Part V returns to more general problems, and the book is completed by two fascinating appendices, the first on psychopathological research and the second a Russian view of Western psychology as presented at the Fourteenth International Congress of Psychology.

It should not be thought that this book is only for psychologists. It is equally of value to teachers, and the general reader who is interested in modern psychology will find it a refreshing change from most books on the subject. The reviewer has resisted the temptation to pick out particular papers, but special mention must be made of the introduction by Brian Simon. It contains what is probably the best short account of the Pavlovian theory of the nature of the conditioned reflex. Because it is one which is free from the customary vulgarised over-simplification, it helps to explain why Soviet psychologists regard Pavlovian theory as dialectical and not mechanistic. Its clear descriptions also serve to introduce the reader to the technical vocabulary. This is a book which can be heartily recommended.

M.H.

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nt's Guide to the 1957 Rent (24 pp. L.R.D. Publications Ltd., *1s.*)

The scores of thousands who bought and benefited from the old Tenant's Guide compiled by the Labour Research Department will welcome this guide to the new Rent Act which came into operation on July 6. The Act as it affects tenants, sub-tenants and landlords is explained in simple language. This guide covers Scotland, England and Wales. It shows which houses will be decontrolled and the arrangements for temporary protection of the tenants. It explains the calculations of the permitted rent increases for dwellings remaining in control. It shows tenants how to get a certificate of disrepair; when tenants can withhold rent increases; what happens with sub-divided houses, and sub-tenants, and so on. R.P.A.

Plutonia, by V. A. Obruchev. (32[illegible] pp. Lawrence & Wishart. Illustrated. *15s.*)

THE author, an eminent geologist, having noted the mistakes in a novel of Jules Verne, was thereby stimulated to turn what Darwin called 'the Record of the Rocks' into a plausible story of adventure. This was in 1915. The tale, reprinted more than once in the U.S.S.R., has at last been translated for the English reader, who can now vic ariously encounter a series of extinc species, from the brontosaurus the mammoth. Macaulay was one the first to bring fossils to life in *Marriage of Tirzah and Ahirad* the tradition, reinforced by V and H. G. Wells, has become a m branch of present-day fiction, n of it as plausible as this book.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China: Vol. I, Documents; Vol. I Vol. III, Greetings from Fraternal Parties. Foreign Languages Press, Peking; Ce London. 3s. 6d.; 4s.; 3s.
The Case for Industrial Partnership, by G. D. H. Cole. Macmillan. 122 pp. 7s. 6d.
Russian Poetry 1917-1955, edited and translated by Jack Lindsay. The Bodley Head.
The Peasant War in Germany, by Frederick Engels. Lawrence & Wishart. 246 pp.
The Development of Capitalism in Russia, by V. I. Lenin. Lawrence & Wishart. 75
A Field of Folk, by Herbert Smith. Lawrence & Wishart. 270 pp. 15s.
Introduction to Marxism, by Emile Burns. Lawrence & Wishart. 76 pp. 3s. 6d.
Capital, Vol. II, by Karl Marx. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Mosco Wishart, London. 546 pp. 7s. 6d.
Do You Know? by M. Ilyin and E. Segal. Central Books. 278 pp. 6s.
The Critique of Capitalist Democracy, by Stanley W. Moore. Paine-Whitman, U.S.A
Assignment China, by Julian Schuman. Whittier Books Inc., U.S.A. 254 pp. $4.00
Labor Fact Book, No. 13. Labor Research Ass'n., New York. 160 pp. $2.00.
Handbook on People's China. Foreign Languages Press, Peking. Collets, Londor
Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside. Foreign Languages Press, Peking. 506 pp. 6s. 6d.
Trade Union Leadership, by V. I. Allen. Longmans Green & Co. 336 pp. 30s.
Bulgaria Under the Red Star, by H. L. Saxena. S. Chand & Co., Delhi. 622 pp

PAMPHLETS

Wages Questions. 16 pp. 9d. Labour Research Department.
Atomic Explosion, by V. K. Krishna Menon. Information Service of India. 3
National Superannuation. The Labour Party. 122 pp. 1s. 6d.
The Soviet Union on Disarmament, 84 pp. 3d.
The Soviet Union on the Middle East, 44 pp. 3d. } Soviet News.
Co-operation and Modern Socialism, by Jack Bailey. Co-operative Party. 16 p
Labour's Colonial Policy I: The Plural Society. 48 pp. 9d.
Labour's Colonial Policy II: Smaller Territories. 30 pp. 9d. } The Labour Party
Improvement of Industrial Management in the U.S.S.R., by N. S. Kh
Training Technicians in the Soviet Union by D. N. Troitsky. 36 pp. 6d.

Published by the Proprietors, The Trinity Trust, 134, Ballards L
and printed by Wembley News, Wembley, Middlesex, Great Bri
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(Continued from page ii of cover)

too, resulting in especially heavy emigration of recent months from the Republic. From the *Six Counties* an old reader writes: 'Just can't afford to renew my sub. at present. Have been out of work this four years with chronic chest trouble; and the struggle to make ends meet gets harder on the small pittance of health benefit. I'll pick up my copy locally each month. I find great comfort and benefit from it. It is something to look forward to.' A *Scot*, however, just getting over a spell of unemployment, writes that 'finance is not too bad now, as I went back to sea on a coastal line. Shall try and pay the next sub. before this one runs out.' A veteran *Londoner* is impatient of lack of enterprise in some spots where L.M. sales are dropping. 'It is only because they are *allowed* to drop,' he writes. 'I can sell plenty to men in the local factory. Readers actually working there could sell many more. People don't seem to appreciate that it is the ordinary, everyday political chores that lay the basis for socialism. There are wonderful opportunities today if L.M. is used as a weapon.' Confirming his view, another reader gives an interesting account of the unexpected benefit he found from joining a L.M. Discussion Group in his factory. He had been bothered by the problem of how to turn mere card-holding members into live, active and militant trade unionists. It had slowly become clear that it couldn't be done without a developed leadership on the job. But how to build it? Then he found it was happening. The regular meeting to discuss the *Notes of the Month* broke down the narrow vicious circle of attention solely to matters of shop concern—and only a languid interest at that. 'From these discussions we shop stewards are getting a firmer grasp of the class struggle for a future society and how it is linked with our daily duties as trade unionists.' And woe betide their literature secretary, by the way, if he has not supplied copies by the first of the month!

In closing, I must warn that the fund is dangerously low; and it is that dangerous time, the holidays. I want to ask readers: 'will you put a little aside for the Fund before you go?' Those who can afford a holiday at all will surely come back skint. June donations totalled only:

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